

# Oldham Poverty Action Network

## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The Oldham Poverty Action Network builds on the existing poverty work of initiatives including the Poverty Action Group, Poverty Truth Commission, OCAN, MoVE, and Cost of Living Crisis Summit. Using an innovative and long-term funding opportunity from [Local Motion](#), we are collaborating across sectors and communities in Oldham to learn how to achieve our vision of: Strengthening community spirit, aligning efforts to tackle poverty, and creating good jobs and social enterprise.

The Network will be action driven based on perspectives and insights from key VCFSE, public and private sector organisations and those with lived experience. The actions led by the network will be evidence of best practice, and develop projects which address the root causes of the three themes in the vision.

The Oldham Poverty Action Network aims to:

- Build relationships and trust between local people and civic leaders that increase understanding of poverty
- Prompt changes in policy and practice within organisations
- Provide a positive example of co-production that Oldham can reference
- Develop new skills for all participants which can be applied to other programmes
- Maximise on the Local Motion investment by putting forward actions using the devolved budget.

This network space will be one of action and intention, a space where VCFSE organisations can form solutions that they would be unable to achieve on their own, a space where strength in numbers can influence system change. The Network will meet regularly, share insight, inform decision making and work collectively.

The Network will consist of:

### Task Groups

Task Groups are part of the co-ordination for the Oldham Poverty Action Network, helping deliver its mission, by working to achieve change around three priorities; Building out from the cost-of living response, Hope and aspirations, creating routes out of poverty, and Building a joined up approach to tackle poverty alleviation and prevention.

Their role will be:

- Lead on directing and galvanizing activity around the priority themes
- Propose their own short-term objectives to make progress toward it
- Report back into the wider network to involve others in emerging pieces of work and minimise duplication of effort
- Put forward topics for Full Network Events
- Develop proposals for action around the identified gaps and opportunities

#### Foundation Group

The purpose of the foundation group is to coordinate and oversee the Networks activities. It will consist of up to 8 member organisations, which is open to both Public Sector and VCFSE organisations. 3 of the foundation group members will be the co-chairs of the priority themed task groups.

Their role will be:

- To guide and support the network members, providing peer support and learning opportunities
- Nurture the emerging work and connect into their 'sphere of influence'
- Propel and supercharge the work forward
- To provide oversight of any funding proposals with final decision making power

#### Lived Experience Peer Support

Lived experience of poverty and hardship is increasingly recognised as equal to 'learnt' experience of professional and decision makers in addressing it. At the heart of the network will be members with lived experience who will play an active role in everything the Network does.

To support those with lived experience to feel able to play an active part in the network, a separate Peer Support group will be established, creating a space where people can build their confidence, support each other, grow into the space. This will be coordinated by a dedicated person who will offer 1:1 support to all the lived experience members, as well as facilitate the peer support group. Learning and development sessions will also be provided to those wishing to enhance their skills.

#### Principles

- The network will be a shared platform, coordinating our collective response to tackle poverty alleviation and prevention, acknowledging that we can achieve more through collaboration and partnership
- Test ways of achieving long-term change that tackles the root causes of poverty based on insight from those experiencing hardship and from the communities of Oldham.

- Maximise on the Local Motion investment opportunity and help to inform an 8-year long-term vision and funding proposal for social change in Oldham, tackling the root causes of injustice.
- Ensuring the voices of people with lived experience inform and influence the decision-making structures across the system.
- Commit to working collectively with local people and local partners, ensuring all work undertaken by the network is co-design and co-produced and any decision making is open and transparent.
- Lobbying to prompt change within Policy and Practice, in response to the experiences of those facing poverty and hardship.
- To tell the story of the network and its impact by harnessing the power of stories as evidence and the change we create.
- Peer support for Network Members to develop new skills which can be applied to other programmes.
- To connect the work we undertake through the Poverty Action Network to wider spheres of work for greater influence and collaboration, reducing the risk of duplication.

## **People**

Network members consist of key VCFSE, private and public sector organisations and those with lived experience of hardship or poverty. Individuals and organisations who are driven by our collective purpose and shared values may join the network.

All Network Members will have the opportunity to align themselves to a themed task group to inform and shape the priorities for the Network. A Co-Chair will be appointed for each of the themed task groups. The Co-Chairs will automatically be appointed as members of the Foundation Group.

Individuals and organisations are invited to submit an Expression of Interest to join the Foundation group and will be appointed based on the communities they are a conduit for and the roles they play within their organisation.

Action Together will facilitate and act as a coordinator of the network, however the network will be lead and owned by the members of the Oldham Poverty Action Network.

## **Priorities**

### **Priority Themed Task Group 1: Building out from the cost-of living response**

- To alleviate the immediate impact hardship has on the residents of Oldham and to support residents to achieve financial inclusion by exploring the causes and solutions.
- To build out from the initial cost-of living investment into the VCFSE sector and ensure a legacy remains after the initial investment.
- To coordinate our response across the public and VCFSE sector to ensure people receive the most appropriate support and access the best services that meet their needs.

### **Priority Themed Task Group 2: Hope and Aspirations, creating routes out of poverty**

- To reduce the stigma associated with poverty, giving people the confidence to reach out for support from services that are designed and delivered in a way that meets the service user's needs.
- To ensure all residents are treated with dignity and respect and supported to fulfill their aspirations and full potential regardless of their social status, race or gender, ensuring people are not just surviving but thriving.
- Improving access to sustainable livelihoods through a better economy where wealth and opportunity are shared fairly across Oldham.

### **Priority Themed Task Group 3: Building a joined up approach to poverty alleviation and prevention**

- To lobby organisations to prompt changes to practice and policy based on the experiences of those impacted by poverty.
- To connect the work of the Poverty Action Network to wider governance structures and systems across the sector.
- To influence and shape policy making, service design and redistribute power amongst stakeholders to ensure equitable practice.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

As Network members we will commit to:

- Having brave conversations in difficult places and work to the best interests of local people in order to achieve the shared vision of the network.
- Delivering immediate actions to address current pressures people in poverty experience and improve the level of support available to those that are at risk of falling into crisis.
- Being courageous and ambitious by dreaming big and not limiting our thinking

- To be inclusive and equitable by valuing and respecting our diversity, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to contribute within the network.
- Attend and contribute to any Network/Task Group/Foundation Group meetings that we have committed to support.
- Be an ambassador for the Oldham Poverty Action Network, describing the vision and its work to others.

## **Reporting**

### Local Motion

- Learning from the network will inform and shape the Local Motion 8-year long-term vision and funding proposal for social change in Oldham, tackling the root causes of injustice.
- The Network will provide monthly progress reports to Oldham Local Motion Core Group for wider oversight and connection to the 6 funders investing in the place.

### Oldham Governance

- The work undertaken by the Oldham Poverty Action Network will connect with wider system structures including Oldham Voluntary Sector Leadership Group and Oldham Partnership Governance Boards.

## **Resources**

The Poverty Action Network has an initial investment of £50,00 to test and learn using devolved budget for co-produced action.

Through Local Motion there is a potential further long term funding opportunity to invest around our vision of: Strengthening community spirit, aligning efforts to tackle poverty, and creating good jobs and social enterprise.

## **Review**

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 12 months

Next review date: October 2023